

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1219

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 3522

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, TH

SUBJ: FORCE REDUCTIONS IN THAILAND

REF: A. STATE 031539 B. STATE 035845

C. BANGKOK 2795 D. STATE 042056

1. WE PLAN TO INITIATE CONSULTATIONS ON FORCE REDUCTIONS SHORTLY AND WILL PROCEED ALONG LINES OUTLINED REF B. AS POINTED OUT REF C, WE EXPECT THE THAI TO PUSH FOR REDUCTIONS BEYOND THE 21,300 LEVEL PROJECTED FOR JUNE 30, 1975.

2. WE DO NOT FEEL THE RTG WILL BE PERSUADED BY ARGUMENT ADVANCED REF D, PARAGRAPH 3, WHICH PLACCES EMPHASIS ON REDUCTIONS FROM ALMOST 28,000 MANPOWER SPACES TO 21,300. THEY RECEIVE MONTHLY FIGURES ON NUMBER OF US PERSONNEL IN COUNTRY AND GOVERNMENT AND MANY OTHER THAI KNOW VERY WELL HOW MANY PEOPLE WE HAVE HERE, AS OPPOSED TO AUTHORIZED SPACES. LATEST FIGURES PASSED TO RTG SHOW THAT AS OF 20 FEBRUARY WE HAD 23,961 PERSONNEL IN COUNTRY.

3. MOREOVER, THROUGH ATTRITION, I.E., NOT REPLACING CERTAIN INDIVIDUALS WHEN THEIR TOURS ARE UP, THE ACTUAL NUMBER OF PERSONNEL IN COUNTRY WILL CONTINUE TO GO DOWN WITHOUT FORMAL WITHDRAWALS AND THEREBY DEPRIVE US OF MUCH OF OUR BARGAINING POWER. THUS, WE ARE LIKELY TO BE EVEN CLOSER TO THE ACTUAL FIGURE OF 21,300 PEOPLE IN COUNTRY WHEN WE BEGIN DISCUSSIONS ON WITHDRAWALS. UNDER

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THESE CIRCUMSTANCES WE DO NOT EXPECT THE THAI WILL BE

SATISFIED WITH A REDUCTION TO 21,300 BY JUNE 30. WE
WILL START WITH THIS FIGURE IN OUR DISCUSSIONS, BUT ANTI-
CIPATE THE THAI WILL PRESS FOR A LOWER FIGURE, AS AN
EARNEST OF THEIR INTENTION JUST ANNOUNCED (SEPTTEL) TO REMOVE
ALL U.S. FORCES WITHIN 18 MONTHS.
KINTNER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TROOP REDUCTIONS, FORCE & TROOP LEVELS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 03 MAR 1975
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CunninFX
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975BANGKO03522
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750073-0984
From: BANGKOK
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750390/aaaaddcy.tel
Line Count: 67
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 75 STATE 031539, 75 STATE 035845
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CunninFX
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 24 JUL 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <24 JUL 2003 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <20 NOV 2003 by CunninFX>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: FORCE REDUCTIONS IN THAILAND
TAGS: MARR, MASS, TH, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006